



News Release

IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

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Dropping Snake River Flow Levels Prompts Warning To Some Water Users

Dropping flow levels on the Snake River near Murphy have prompted state water managers to issue warnings to holders of approximately 83 Snake River water rights that they may be required to stop diverting water from the Snake River and surface water tributaries. This is in order for the state to satisfy Idaho Power Company's 3,900 cfs water right for the Swan Falls Dam, the Idaho Department of Water Resources announced today.

IDWR says the current drought conditions in Idaho, the poor water year, and the forecasted hot weather may result in the Snake River natural flow falling below 3,900 cubic feet per second (cfs) flow levels at the Murphy River gauging station after flow augmentation is subtracted. Water rights tributary to the Snake River below Milner junior to July 1, 1985 are subject to curtailment to satisfy the Swan Falls minimum flow. Flow levels in the Snake River at the Murphy gauge are typically the lowest during June and July.

A letter from IDWR to the junior priority water users states: "Your water right listed above bears a later priority date than the priority date for minimum stream flow. As a result, if the flow falls below 3,900 cfs, plus any flow resulting from storage released or water left in the Snake River by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation for flow augmentation, you must cease diversion for all consumptive uses under the above referenced water right(s). If the flow is not met, the department will send you another letter advising you to temporarily cease diversion of water."

The Swan Falls minimum flow was established by the Idaho Legislature to resolve lawsuits by the company against the state.

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